



Badlands National Park Briefing Statement

Fiscal Year 2004 Visitor Survey Results

Prepared: October 3, 2004

Purpose of Survey

To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a visitor survey was conducted during the month of July, 2004. The survey was developed to measure the park unit's performance related to visitor satisfaction and visitor understanding and appreciation. While this survey includes an area for independent visitor comments, its results reflect the visiting public's perception the following work areas:

- Fee Collection
- Interpretation and Visitor Centers
- Maintenance
- Recreational Opportunities

Methodology

Surveys were developed by the Cooperative Park Studies Unit (Social Science) at the University of Idaho and distributed during the month of July at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, Pinnacles Overlook, Big Badlands Overlook, Cedar Pass Lodge, Cedar Pass Campground, and the Pig Dig. Surveys are distributed by uniformed park volunteers and employees on a random basis as instructed by the CPSU. Badlands National Park received sufficient responses in all categories for all results to be considered statistically valid and an accurate representation of overall visitor opinion. The methodology used and results yield a 95% confidence rate on the part of social scientists in our results.

Number of Surveys Distributed: 400

Number of Surveys Returned: 136 (34% response rate)

Visitor Satisfaction

- **Overall Satisfaction with Badlands National Park: 98%**
 - ✓ Satisfaction with Visitor Center: 87%
 - ✓ Satisfaction with exhibits (indoor/outdoors) 82%
 - ✓ Satisfaction with restrooms: 89%
 - ✓ Satisfaction with walkways, trails, and roads: 95%
 - ✓ Satisfaction with campgrounds and picnic areas: 87%
- *Overall satisfaction with park provided facilities: 88%*

- ✓ 100% Satisfaction with assistance from park employees: 96%
- ✓ Satisfaction with park brochure: 95%
- ✓ **Satisfaction with ranger programs: 100%**
- ✓ Satisfaction with concession services in the park: 73%
- Overall satisfaction with visitor services: 92%
- **If you remove satisfaction with concession and assess only satisfaction with NPS provided visitor services, satisfaction level is 97%**
 - ✓ Satisfaction with opportunities to learn about nature, history, or culture: 94%
 - ✓ Satisfaction with opportunities for outdoor recreation: 86%
 - ✓ Satisfaction with sightseeing opportunities: 97%
- Overall satisfaction with recreational opportunities: 93%

Visitor Understanding

85 (63% of respondents) answered the question designed to test this: ***In your opinion, what is the national significance of this park?*** NOTE: This is in the visitors' opinion, not what the park's legislation says. This reflects what visitors value as much as what they understand the park to be "about."

89% of visitors responding to this question gave an answer that matches one of the park's significance statements (in intent)

- Geological formations/natural beauty: 52%
- Paleontology/research: 3%
- Human history: 25%
- Ecology (wildlife, plants): 20%

Park Significance List:

- Badlands National Park was set aside for scientific research and public enjoyment of mammal fossils.
- Today, Badlands National Park protects a fine example of the mixed grass prairie and its associated biota.
- Visitors come to the Badlands to learn about 11,000 years of human history on the Great Plains.
- Wilderness, solitude, and outdoor recreation are draws for those from urban areas.
- The natural beauty of the Badlands is a backdrop of geologic formations.

Additional Comments Recorded

- Love being able to walk anywhere and not being restricted to marked trails
- Fee collectors are grumpy
- I will come back!
- You need more restrooms
- Keep people from walking all over it!
- We wish the Cedar Pass Lodge was more modern with cabins.
- We love this park. We returned after visiting last year and having such good ranger programs.
- Possibly add a mountain biking trail
- P.S. The ranger programs here are great. Keep up the good work.
- The Window Trail needs work. It's a mess.
- Bring the free primitive campground in closer please. It's an hour away!
- Condition of this park reflects funding under a Republican administration more concerned about tax cuts and the rich.
- Helps with jobs locally. This is a plus.
- The indoor exhibits are poor. The outdoor exhibits are good to very good. Free publications are excellent.
- Lodge service was slow. Visitor center staff was very good.

- I miss the Night Prowl It was an awesome way to see the night sky and feel the darkness.
- Please tell us more about the Native American population that lived here.
- We would like showers in the campground and more hiking trails.
- Showers in the campground would be nice.
- Keep up the good work! I would support any initiative for more funding for naturalists for the NPS!
- Could you perhaps have fossil digs for the public to participate in – similar to John Day Fossil Beds?
Other parks don't seem to think we're idiots.
- Find a corporate sponsor for the Pig Dig.
- The volunteer interns were excellent.
- Picnic tables are good.
- Campground needs electricity and showers.
- Needs showers and more rain
- Add hook ups for RVs
- Tell the whole story, not just fossils.
- Get a better movie
- More rangers for people
- VC staff was great
- You need a new visitor center
- Consider a shuttle system for hikers and bikers
- Where's the wildlife?

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